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June, 1873.

## SHERMAN AND GRAYSON COUNTY.

**SHERMAN** IS LOCATED ON AN eminence, not the highest in the county, but sufficiently so for perfect drainage, and has a population of from 3,500 to 5,000. The town, although located and named in 1846, is newly built up, with little regard to regularity in size, height, or style of houses. But few brick and no stone houses have as yet been built, although plenty of brick and building rock are both convenient and cheap—the first manufactured and the latter dug from the ground at shallow depth in and around the town. Wooden houses are going up in such numbers as to surpass all belief. Brick houses are the *coming style*—several are going up and many are contracted for and in contemplation. The streets are busy, and the "sits and bustle" would rather remind you of some great *metropolis* than a *frontier city*.

All the businesses, trades and professions, and different national and "statealities" of people are well represented here, *at least in numbers*. The bar, billiard, eating saloon and millinery businesses take the lead in numbers. The dry goods, grocery, hardware and other trades are well supplied. The gambler- and another "fast tribe," are rather overdoing their business in numbers, as well as their acts of boldness. We have no law licensing either as is supposed there, and the courts are after them "right and left."

The town is well supplied with good school houses—will soon be with churches built or to be built.

*Society* is by no means settled. The people are all "new comers," and have such extremely different manners, habits and ways, that it will take time to regulate it.

We have railroad communication with Galveston, 370 miles on the south, by the Texas Central, and with St. Louis, 632 miles on the north, by the Missouri, Kansas and Texas. The iron will commence to be laid on the Trans-Continental east, in a few days. Many other charters, starting from this point, with land subsidies sufficient to build them, were granted by the Legislature just adjourned, which will certainly make this the *great town* of Northern Texas. The *prospect* makes city as well as country property rather high, as compared to points where the advantages referred to, are not expected. Housekeeping is troublesome on account of the scarcity of servants. Cooks get from \$8 to \$20 per month. Men servants get from \$150 to \$250 per annum. Serviles are more plentiful, cheaper and *easily superior* to those there. Our beef and mutton can't be beat. Good board and lodging, thirty dollars per month. We have two weekly and one daily and weekly papers. The daily and weekly and one weekly are Democratic, and the other Republican, and all seem to be doing well. The town and county are Democratic.

We have a good many colored people, but they are as a general rule, an indolent, worthless set, and want to do "Job work" just enough to live on and loaf the balance of the time.

## GRAYSON COUNTY, TEXAS,

Was created in 1850, and has an area of 960 square miles. It was named in honor of Peter W. Grayson, a prominent man in the days of the Texas Republic. Sherman is the county seat and was named for Sidney Sherman who was also a prominent man in Mr. Grayson's day. It is the Red River and Indian Territory on the North, from thirty to forty miles square, with a population of about twenty thousand and \$4,000,000 taxable property, and contains as great a variety of products (or climates) perhaps as any country in the Southern States. Any kind of soil of the black kind can be found from a "black wax" equal in stickiness to Georgia to the black sandy in mud not quite so bad as the black waxy, either of which in common pasture here "does not amount to much;" but to a man from the sandy region of Southwestern Georgia they are almost intolerable. The simple truth is, a man from that country could only be made to believe what amount of mud and how sticky it is, one rain will bring to the surface in this country meeting it, he can only fully realize what it is by getting "stuck" in it, but there is no bottom to the soil or end to its productiveness; none better, I venture to say, anywhere.

The average crop of corn is from 40 to 60 bushels, of wheat from 20 to 40 bushels of oats from 50 to 60 bushels, and of cotton from two-thirds to one 500-lb bale to the acre, all dependent on soil and seasons. Wheat sells at from \$1. to \$2, corn from 10 cents to \$1, oats from \$1. to 50 cents per bushel, and cotton from 1 to 2 cents cheaper than there. Plenty of good hay is cut from the prairie, which sells from 1 to 2 cents per lb. One hand cultivates twenty acres, but I imagine with your system of labor fifteen acres would be sufficient. Field labor is scarce and in great demand. Good hands get \$20 per month with board. Employers are prompt, too, in their payments, but the work is heavy and hard. The great rapidity with which weeds and grass grow in this county requires prompt attention on the part of farmers. Corn and cotton are planted and cultivated in the usual tedious way. Wheat and oats are planted and gathered with machinery, with but little trouble or expense to the farmer after he has once invested in fixing fit. The wood portion of the county produces walnut, pecan, grapes, haws, plums and sweet crab apples; the uncultivated prairie, wild strawberries in abundance. None of these are turned to either good or profitable account, except the grapes for wine, apples for jelly and and preserves, and strawberries for desert. All the cultivated fruits that you have in Georgia grow equally as well if not better here than there. The timber—what there is of it—is scrubby, not half the size or height or adaptability to the farmer's use of that in Georgia. About one-fifth of the land is in cultivation. None but the prairie land is attempted to be cultivated, and the prairie in

clades or covers about eight-tenths of the finding the scarcity of and extravagant prices demanded for building material, and perhaps, country.

To bring land into cultivation requires a man-month turning plow, draw general by five yoke of oxen, with one head to the plow and one to drive. This turning of the prairie sod must be done a season before cultivation, and costs from \$3 to \$1 per acre done by men who follow it as a business. Rails are bought and hauled from one to twenty and thirty miles, according to the distance of the farm all kinds of feed. from the timber, and cost from \$3 to \$4 50 a hundred. The cost of bringing prairie land into a proper state for cultivation, including fencing, is from \$6 to \$8 per acre, and depends very much upon the number of fences that can be "joined to" and the distance the rails are to be hauled for a cheap or expensive fence.

The face of the country is rather broken in some places. Parts of it are as much so as the Middle Georgia, and cut up equally as badly with branches and small creeks, almost all of which go dry in the summer and fall. Other unfortunate localities will subside to beat parks are beautifully level, just undulating wheat, corn, oats, and cotton into the mud—enough for drainage, allowing you to see houses from six to twelve miles.

"Ringo stock"—horses, mules, and cattle—make out to get through the winter, but in the summer they do splendidly. Oxen work all the time and faten on beef (many of them fat enough now) without my loss but what they get to drink. They work at night and rest times. Many work *blaze*; but, strange, it does not come downward like these, except occasionally. Some people

might say these were *mais*, *gaillard*, *rund* *sights*; they had been between two armies in a hard battle, breaking and bruising all, and killing some of the trees. The wind in these storms blows hard, but that does not amount to much. The lightning is one continual *flash* or *blaze*; but, strange, it does not come downward like these, except occasionally. Some people have no experience. The old settlers say "they do not amount to much"; but those who come in later, and whom I am inclined to believe, tell me they are all the people out there think they are—that the wind blows almost a gale from the northwest, and the temperature changes from 80° to freezing in a few minutes! All this may "not amount to much" to those used to it; but how will it be with a thin-blooded Southwestern Georgian? The extremes of heat and cold are about as Tallowessee in summer and Chicago in winter. But, say what you will or hear what you may of this country, no one who has seen it, with the knowledge of the *rise* and *progress* of the Northwestern States staring him in the face which, try as he best, have a much worse climate, with every other fault, much worse than can be argued against Northern Texas, can help but admit that the prospects of this State for a bright, great and glorious future are now *sealed* and *assured* beyond all reasonable and probable doubt.

The prospect, to my mind, is so bright, that it resolves itself into a *fact already settled*. People are leaving the Northwestern States and coming here in great numbers, and they all say this State is a *paradise* compared to theirs. Farming here is both easy (on account of the shortness of the time crops are required to be worked) and remunerative. Go where you may and talk to the farmer, and he will *invariably* tell you he makes money. Now what is to prevent this land, in a few short years, from commanding as good, yes, better prices, than the Northern and Northwestern lands, which range from \$50 to \$150 per acre?

The water here is bad—*as bad as your rotten lime*—unless saved in cisterns, which, owing to

the porous, rotten soil, are much more expensive and troublesome than with you. Water from a good cistern properly constructed is a luxury that but few of the Texas people indulge in. Although the weather at times gets intensely hot and do so well, *for generations to come*. The in the day, the nights are delightfully pleasant, and the sleeping most comfortable, refreshing, and invigorating—which, with good water and a pure atmosphere, would certainly make this a very healthy climate. Northern Texas, and this country especially, is said to be healthy, but, in my judgment, he who escapes bilious fever, chills, and the like, in this country will be most fortunate. Those who have lived here for some time admit as much; but, at the same time, they will tell you "they don't amount to much," while, by the way, is a favorite expression out here, when they wish to "cover faults that can't be concealed."

The laws of this State are not only much more strict and certain in their punishment, but are twice as rigidly enforced as in Georgia. Crime, it is true, is of a little (but very little) more frequent occurrence here than there; but this is accounted for by the fact that many *desperadoes*, *outlaws*, and others, charged with crime in the older States, seek refuge in this. But when they do get one of these fellows up, and "de-agent" inquiry is made for them, "condign" punishment is speedily meted out to him. The criminal pleading here is as loose and simple as the Georgia "John Jones" civil pleading, which, with the disposition of the courts and juries to put down crime, gives a guilty defendant little or no chance to escape his just punishment, however able his counsel or great their effort may be.

Professional and other men, whose business keeps them in-doors, would to a greater or less extent avoid and keep out of the unpleasant and objectionable points to the country, but, let me tell you, when you come out to run an in-door business, let it be what it may, you will find competition unheard of undreamed of in Georgia, *at least in numbers*. That kind swarm here like the locusts "we read of." The supply has already run clear away with the demand, and will be amply sufficient for at least this generation. But all these things, when the country settles up, and the people have time to judge of and appreciate true merit, will go to those who deserve

success in what they undertake. And all these in-door businesses here are perhaps as well, or even better patronized than in Georgia, and will necessarily improve, as the country settles up. The prospects of my firm are hopeful, in fact, *flattering*. If we can be healthy this will be our future home, but, if this climate breeds bilious fever, chills, and the like, so as to make it *unhealthy*, in the sense the word is used in Georgia, then "neither *money* or *name* would be any inducement to remain." I would rather plow a no-horned ox on the poor hills of Middle Georgia, and be *healthy*, than to be *Governor of Texas without health*.

Game, such as deer, turkey, prairie chicken, squirrels, partridges, and doves (with a good chance of fish in the spring and early summer), is rather plentiful. Those who are fond of hunting make up parties and go across the river into the Indian Nation, where the sport is fine, and "camp hunt."

In conclusion then, "upona a calm survey of all the surroundings," this country, relieved of its faults, without more, would be the best in the known world. *With all its faults* it is much above the average. The man though who comes to it with the expectation or slightest hope of getting rich, or even making a decent living, without lively, active effort, with many privations, difficulties, and hardships *not dreamed of*, there will be sadly mistaken, and fall into the "well set trap" of the *returned* Georgian.

A man who has a good home there, is healthy, and doing well, with nine times out of ten, regret a move to a new country. He will certainly be thrown into troubles, society, and hardships; he is caused to, but which will improve and be removed as the country gets older. The greatest difficulty there is the lack of judgment to direct and utilize and economy to husband what might be good results. Northern and Western men get rich on less incomes than your people are driven into bankruptcy on. Away, then, with false pride; realize your condition, and many, *very many*, "emigration fevers" will be cured. But when a move is necessary, which often happens, this country is at least well worth looking at; and when you get here you will find that I have not over-estimated its advantages or under-estimated its disadvantages.